Heat Waves / Dehydration

Dehydration and heat stroke are common heat-related diseases that can be life-threatening if left untreated. If the temperature or humidity is going up or an air pollution alert is in effect, you are at increased risk for a heat-related illness. Play it safe by checking the weather report before going outside.

Heat-related illness occurs when the body's temperature control system is overloaded. The body normally cools itself by sweating. But under some conditions, sweating isn’t enough and a person’s body temperature rises rapidly. Very high body temperatures may damage the brain or other vital organs. When both the temperature and humidity are high, sweat will not evaporate as quickly, preventing the body from releasing heat quickly. Old age, youth (age 0–4), obesity, fever, dehydration, heart disease, mental illness, poor circulation, sunburn and prescription drug and alcohol use are other risk factors for heat-related illness.

Heat Stroke and Heat Exhaustion

Heat stroke is the most serious heat-related illness. When the body is unable to control its temperature, it rises rapidly and sweating mechanisms fail. Body temperature may rise to 106°F or higher within 10–15 minutes. Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not provided. Heat exhaustion is less severe, more common, and occurs when the body becomes severely dehydrated. If left untreated, it leads to heat stroke.

Signs of Heat Stroke

- Extremely high body temperature (above 103°F)
- Red, hot, dry skin (no sweating)
- Rapid, strong pulse
- Throbbing headache; dizziness
- Nausea; confusion
- Unconsciousness

These are signs of a life-threatening emergency. Have someone call 911 while you begin cooling the person:

- Get him to a shady area.
- Cool him rapidly, however you can: Immerse him in a cool tub of water or shower; spray him with cool water from a garden hose; sponge him with cool water; or, if the humidity is low, wrap him in a cool, wet sheet and fan him vigorously.
- Monitor body temperature; continue cooling efforts until body temperature drops to 101–102°F.
- If emergency medical personnel are delayed, call the ER for further instructions.
- If he is conscious and able to swallow, give cool water or other nonalcoholic, decaffeinated beverages.
Dehydration

Dehydration occurs when the body loses too much fluid. This can happen either when a person doesn’t drink enough, or when she loses large amounts of fluid through diarrhea, vomiting, sweating, or exercise. A severely dehydrated body no longer has enough fluid to get blood to vital organs. This can cause shock, a life-threatening condition. Because elderly people don’t feel thirst as much, make a special effort to provide the person in your care with enough fluids. A person’s fluid balance can be affected by medication, emotional stress, exercise, nourishment, general health, and weather. Dehydration, especially in the elderly, can increase confusion and muscle weakness and cause nausea. Nausea, in turn, will prevent her from eating or drinking, causing more dehydration.

Older adults can become dehydrated because they may:

- Have kidneys that do not work well.
- Choose not to drink because of incontinence.
- Have physical problems that make it hard to drink or hold a glass, find it painful or exhausting to walk to the bathroom, or difficult to communicate.
- Take medicines that increase urine output.

Stay Hydrated, Stay Safe

Drink: Drinking plenty of water is key to staying healthy in the heat. During hot weather, drink more liquid than your thirst indicates. Increase fluid intake, regardless of activity level. Avoid drinks containing alcohol, caffeine and sugar because they actually cause you to lose more fluid. If a doctor limits fluid intake, make sure to ask how much to drink when it is hot.

Keep drinks cool, not cold, which causes stomach cramps.

Wear loose clothing which helps air to circulate around your skin, allowing sweat to evaporate and cool your body.

Stay out of the sun.

Wear a hat, sunglasses and sunscreen: Sunburned skin hampers your body’s ability to cool off.

Know the symptoms: Symptoms of heat exhaustion include fatigue, weakness, nausea, vomiting, headache, dizziness, muscle cramps and irritability. If you notice any of these symptoms, take a break and drink water.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; WebMD; MayoClinic.com; MedicineNet
AAA Programs

• **Caregiver Support.** Services to support non-paid caregivers of frail older adults who need services to maintain independent living.

• **Homemaker/chore programs.** Ongoing assistance with the upkeep and cleanliness of the home, shopping, and occasional heavy-duty cleaning are available through these programs.

• **Medication management.** Nurses visit private homes regularly to setup medications and monitor their use.

• **Assessment.** An in-home meeting with a potential client to determine needs for services. Additional assistance may be provided to coordinate multiple services if needed.

• **Nutrition Services.** Adults 60 and older in Johnson County have three dining options, based on their needs and preferences. Each meal provides a minimum of one-third of the daily nutritional requirements.

  **CHAMPSS:** A senior dining option to augment meals at Senior Nutrition Centers, CHAMPSS provides greater time flexibility and more extensive menu selections at local grocery stores. Call 913-715-8894 for information regarding enrollment.

  **Meals on Wheels:** Volunteers deliver nutritious meals Monday through Friday to senior adults who are homebound.

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**Senior Nutrition Centers:** Nutritious meals are served at 11:30 a.m. five days a week at six centers. The centers offer friendship, education, fitness, and opportunities for socializing.

- **De Soto**
  - 32905 W. 84th St.
  - 913-585-1762

- **Gardner**
  - 128 E. Park St.
  - 913-856-3471

- **Lenexa**
  - 13425 Walnut St.
  - 913-888-6141

- **Merriam/Shawnee**
  - 5701 Merriam Drive
  - 913-677-2048

- **Overland Park**
  - 8101 Marty St.
  - 913-648-2949

- **Roeland Park**
  - 4850 Rosewood Drive
  - 913-826-3139

- **Spring Hill**
  - 401 N. Madison St.
  - 913-592-3180

• **Legal services.** Seniors receive access to legal consultation and representation, education, and assistance with access to government benefits.

• **Personal care.** Attendants help senior adults with bathing, grooming, and other personal care.

• **Respite care.** An in-home substitute caregiver or adult day care can provide temporary relief for non-paid caregivers.

• A **private pay care management service** is offered through the ADRC. This service assists those who need help in setting up services for seniors in Johnson County.

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**For information on programs call 913-715-8861**
Taking Care of Yourself — Stop COVID-19 Virus

Handwashing is one of the best ways to protect yourself and your family from getting sick. During the COVID-19 pandemic, you should especially clean hands after you have been in a public place and touched an item or surface that may be frequently touched by other people, such as door handles, tables, gas pumps, shopping carts, or electronic cashier registers/screens, etc. Also wash hands before touching your eyes, nose, or mouth because that’s how germs enter our bodies.

Germs can spread from other people or surfaces when you:
- Touch your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Prepare or eat food and drinks with unwashed hands
- Touch a contaminated surface or objects
- Blow your nose, cough, or sneeze into hands and then touch other people’s hands or common objects

Source: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus

Inspiration
Be optimistic. It feels better.
— Dalai Lama

Memory Care - Glass of Water

All older adults are at risk for dehydration, but this risk increases for people with Alzheimer’s. Besides forgetting to drink, people with Alzheimer’s may not be able to communicate their needs or have difficulty swallowing. If they are incontinent, they may avoid fluids. A major cause of emergency room visits for frail or demented older adults is dehydration.
The mission of the Johnson County Area Agency on Aging is to advocate for and assist older adults in maintaining their independence and dignity through community-based services.

The Area Agency on Aging sponsors services to support non-paid caregivers of frail older adults who need services to maintain independent living.

If you are a caregiver and need help, contact the Johnson County Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) Information Specialist at 913-715-8861.

The AAA works with community-based organizations to provide services for caregivers. These services are funded under the Family Caregiver Support Program (FCSP). There is no fee to the caregiver for these services but donations are appreciated.

FCSP Services may include:

- **Respite Care**
- **Supplemental Services** – These services, attendant/person care, bathroom items, chore, homemaker, flex, repair/maintenance/renovation, transportation, are provided on a limited basis to complement the care provided by the caregivers.
- Services may also be available for Grandparents or Relative Caregivers.

**HELPFUL WEBSITES:**

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<tr>
<th>Johnson County Area Agencies on Aging (AAA)</th>
<th>Family Caregiver Alliance</th>
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<tr>
<th>Aging &amp; Accessibility Directory</th>
<th>National Institute on Aging</th>
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<th>AAA Caregiver Support</th>
<th>Hospice Caregiver Information</th>
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<th>Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS)</th>
<th>Hospice Foundation of America</th>
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<th>Kansas Caregiver Guide</th>
<th>National Cancer Institute</th>
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The Aging Network

As a result of 1973 amendments to the 1965 Older Americans Act, federal funding is provided for a network of agencies to coordinate services for the growing population of older Americans. This network includes the federal Administration for Community Living (ACL), state administrative units on aging, more than 655 nationwide Area Agencies on Aging (AAA), and thousands of community-based senior centers and nutrition sites.

The Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) is the state administrative unit that oversees the operation of 11 state AAAs. Although most AAAs are private, not-for-profit agencies operating in multiple counties, the Johnson County AAA is a public not-for-profit operating as a unit of Johnson County Human Services.

For detailed information, visit www.jocogov.org/hsd.

Aging and Disability Resource Center

The Area Agency on Aging hosts your local Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC), where people can turn for information, assistance, and a single point of entry to public long-term support programs and benefits. ADRCs provide unbiased, reliable information and options assistance to persons eligible for Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) for Frail Elderly, Physical Disabilities and Traumatic Brain Injuries, as well as assessment services for persons considering a move to a nursing facility.

Receive services or be of service. Both are easy!

Begin receiving aging services. To learn more about any of the services provided through the Johnson County AAA, call an aging information specialist at 913-715-8861.

Become a volunteer. Consider joining the network of dedicated volunteers who help senior adults live in the Johnson County community with independence, dignity, and hope. Volunteers may choose activities that meet their interests and time schedules. The AAA’s priority volunteer program is Meals on Wheels. Call the coordinator of Volunteer Services at 913-715-8859 to learn more or to become a volunteer.

AAA Programs

- **Aging Information and Assistance.** Aging information specialists provide timely, updated facts about aging issues and services over the phone, through email, or in person by appointment.

- **Publications about Aging.** A variety of print and electronic materials provide important information of interest to senior adults and family caregivers.

- **The Best Times**, a quarterly newsmagazine, is available to Johnson County residents 60 and older. The Best Times provides vital information about aging services, programs, organizations, activities, and issues. The publication is also available online. Contact 913-715-8930 concerning subscriptions.
Cities tend to be hotter than their natural surroundings because if you have less green cover, you will have higher temperatures, and greater exposure to heat. Trees provide shade, but they also cool the environment down through the evaporation of water from their leaves — a process similar to how humans sweat to cool down. Answer True or False to the questions below.

1. Heat stroke is the most serious heat-related illness.
   T F

2. Avoid drinks containing alcohol, caffeine and sugar because they actually cause you to lose more fluid.
   T F

3. People with Alzheimer’s forget to drink and may not be able to communicate their needs.
   T F

4. When the body is unable to control its temperature, it rises rapidly and sweating mechanisms fail.
   T F

5. It is extremely important to recognize early symptoms of heat exhaustion.
   T F

6. Heat stroke is not a life-threatening emergency.
   T F

7. If the heat stroke victim is conscious and able to swallow, give him cool water or other nonalcoholic drinks or decaffeinated beverages.
   T F

8. A severely dehydrated body no longer has enough fluid to get blood to vital organs. This can cause shock, a life-threatening condition.
   T F

9. Old age, obesity, dehydration, heart disease, sunburn and prescription drug and alcohol use are some other risk factors for heat-related illness.
   T F

10. Touching your eyes, nose, or mouth is not how germs enter our bodies.
    T F
Safety Tips — Washing your hands is easy, and it’s one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs and COVID-19. Clean hands can stop germs from spreading from one person to another and throughout an entire community. Follow these five steps every time:

1. Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.
4. Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
5. Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

Source: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus

Five Steps to Wash Your Hands the Right Way